

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 IO-12 DPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 SSO-00 INRE-00 RSR-01 AID-20 EUR-25 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9845

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

CINCPAC

CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5918

E. O. 11652: ADS: DECLASSIFY 12/31/74

TAGS: MOPS VS

SUBJECT: HONG NGU BATTLE SPOT REPORT AS OF APRIL 7

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO APRIL 8, 1973

REPEATED FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0145

E. O. 11652: ADS: DECLASSIFY 12/31/74

TAGS: MOPS VS

SUBJECT: HONG NGU BATTLE SPOT REPORT AS OF APRIL 7

1. SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTIVITY AROUND HONG NGU INCREASED FROM 1-6 APRIL. NVA ROCKETS CAUSED HEAVY CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN TAN CHAU AND FORCED THE ICCS OUT OF HONG NGU. ALTHOUGH A MAJOR BATTLE MAY BE IN THE OFFING, THE GVN IS CONFIDENT HONG NGU TOWN WILL NOT FALL. WE HAVE COUNSELED THE ICCS NOT TO RETURN TO HONG NGU UNTIL THE ACTION DIES DOWN. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE GVN REPORTS 42 NVA INITIATED IN AND AROUND HONG NGU FROM 1-6 APRIL. OF THESE, 11 WERE GROUND ATTACKS AND 24 WERE SHELLING INCIDENTS, 13 OF WHICH CONSISTED OF 122 MM ROCKETS. TWENTY- THREE 122 MM ROCKET ROUNDS HAVE LANDED IN HONG NGU DISTRICT TOWN RESULTING IN RELATIVELY LIGHT DAMAGE. ONE CIVILIAN HOUSE WAS DESTROYED AND ONE CIVILIAN WAS WOUNDED. FOUR ROCKETS HAVE STRUCK LONG KHANH VILLAGE TOWN ACROSS THE RIVER FROM HONG NGU, DESTROYING SIX CIVILIAN HOUSES. ARTILLERY BATTERY LOCATED WITHIN THE TOWN LIMITS. THE BATTERY IS SUPPORTING THE ARVN 14 TH REGIMENT OPERATING AGAINST THE NVA IN HONG NGU. NONE OF THE ROCKETS HAS STRUCK THE ARTILLERY BATTERY. MOST ROUNDS HAVE FALLEN IN AMORE OR LESS RANDOM PATTERN THROUGHOUT TAN CHAU. CHAU DOC PROVINCE OFFICIALS HAVE REPORTEDLY ASKED THE 9 TH DIVISION TO MOVE THE ARTILLERY OUT OF TAN CHAU. IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO FIND ANOTHER SUITABLE LOCATION FOR THE ARTILLERY PIECES, HOWEVER, BECUASE THE SURROUNDING AREA IS MOSTLY MARSH. ACCORDING TO THE DISTRICT CHIEF THE DEFENSE OF HONG NGU HAS SUFFERED FROM LACK OF AIR SUPPORT. NEUTRALIZATION OF THE ARTILLERY WOULD THUS GIVE THE NVA FURTHER ADVANTAGE.

3. FROM APRIL 1-6 THERE HAS BEEN HEAVY CONTACT BETWEEN NVA AND GVN FORCES IN THE HONG NGU AREA. THE GVN REPORTS KILLING 87 NVA AND CAPTURING 27 INDIVIDUAL WEAPONS, TWO ANTI- AIRCRAFT MACHINE GUNS, TWO 60 MM MORTARS AND ONE RPG. GVN LOSSES ARE REPORTED AT 5 KIA AND 91 WOUNDED.

4. MGEN MCALPINE, SENIOR CANADIAN ICCS MILITARY ADVISOR, VISITED HONG NGU APRIL 6 WITH MGEN DI, 9 TH ARVN DIVISION COMMANDER. DI ASSURED MCALPINE THAT THERE WAS NO IMMEDIATE THREAT OF AN NVA GROUND ATTACK AGAINST HONG NGU TOWN. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT NO AIRSTRIKES ARE GOING INTO CAMBODIA SO THE NVA HAS COMPLETE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BORDER. THIS "MAKES IT DIFFICULT" FOR HIM TO DO HIS JOB, DI SAID. DI ORDERED THE KIEN PHONG PROVINCE CHIEF TO BUILD A BUNKER FOR THE ICCS AND BELIEVES THAT THE ICCS WILL RETURN WHEN IT IS FINISHED.

5. NVA 122 MM ROCKETS AGAIN STRUCK TAN CHAU DISTRICT TOWN, CHAU DOC PROVINCE, ABOUT 8 KM FROM HONG NGU, APRIL 6. THE FOUR ROCKETS KILLED 15 CIVILIANS, WOUNDED 35 MORE AND DESTROYED 42 HOUSES. A VICE CONSUL SAW HUNDREDS OF RESIDENTS FLEEING THE TOWN IN THE DIRECTION OF THE PROVINCE CAPITAL. HE FOLLOWED SUIT. TOTAL CIVILIAN ROCKETING CASUALTIES IN TAN CHAU FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAST SIX WEEKS ARE SOME 70 KILLED AND 150 WOUNDED. IF THE NVA

INTENTION IS TO IMPRESS THE POPULATION, IT HAS CERTAINLY DONE
SO. TAN CHAU IS IN A STATE OF FEAR.

6. THE ROCKETING OF THE PROSPEROUS AND ONCE SECURE TAN CHAU DISTRICT TOWN MAY BE AIMED AT AN ARVN 9 TH DIVISION 175 MM ARTILLERY BATTERY LOCATED WITHIN THE TOWN LIMITS. THE BATTERY IS SUPPORTING THE ARVN 14 TH REGIMENT OPERATING AGAINST THE NVA IN HONG NGU. NONE OF THE ROCKETS HAS STRUCK THE ARTILLERY BATTERY. MOST ROUNDS HAVE FALLEN IN A MORE OR LESS RANDOM PATTERN THROUGHOUT TAN CHAU. CHAU DOC PROVINCE OFFICIALS HAVE REPORTEDLY ASKED THE 9 TH DIVISION TO MOVE THE ARTILLERY OUT OF TAN CHAU. IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO FIND ANOTHER SUITABLE LOCATION FOR THE ARTILLERY PIECES, HOWEVER, BECAUSE THE SURROUNDING AREA IS MOSTLY MARSH. ACCORDING TO THE DISTRICT CHIEF THE DEFENSE OF HONG NGU HAS SUFFERED FROM LACK OF AIR SUPPORT. NEUTRALIZATION OF THE ARTILLERY WOULD THUS GIVE THE NVA FURTHER ADVANTAGE.

7. ALTHOUGH WE AGREE WITH THE GVN ASSESSMENT THAT THE NVA PROBABLY CANNOT TAKE AND HOLD HONG NGU, IT APPEARS THAT A MAJOR BATTLE OVER THE TOWN IS SHAPING UP. HONG NGU IS THE ONLY ENTRY CONTROL POINT WITHIN THE RVN THE PRG HAS IDENTIFIED BUT DOES NOT PRESENTLY CONTROL. GIVEN THE COMMUNISTS' EXPERIENCE AT SAY HUYNH, QUANG TRI, AND AN LOC, THEY CANNOT REASONABLY EXPECT THE GVN TO PERMIT THE NVA TO OCCUPY HONG NGU. THEREFORE, THE NVA MAY HAVE THE MORE LIMITED GOAL OF ESTABLISHING CONTROL IN THE SURROUNDING AREA, FORCING THE GVN TO SETTLE FOR HONG NGU TOWN ALONG.

8. THE NVA REPORTEDLY HAS ONE ARTILLERY AND THREE INFANTRY REGIMENTS IN THE HONG NGU AREA. THE ARVN 14 TH REGIMENT PLUS 3 KIEN PHONG RF BATTALIONS AND 21 PF PLATOONS, AND ELEMENTS OF AN ARVN 9 TH DIVISION CAVALRY SQUADRON ARE FACING THE NVA. THE GVN HAS PULLED OUT ALL THE CHAU DOC RF UNITS WHICH FORMERLY OPERATED IN HONG NGU.

9. GIVEN THE NVA CAPABILITY TO MORTAR AND ROCKET THE TOWN ALMOST AT WILL, WE BELIEVE THE ICCS SHOULD NOT RETURN TO HONG NGU, BUNKERS OR NO, UNTIL THE NVA ROCKETING HAS BEEN SUPPRESSED. WE HAVE MADE THIS POINT TO REGION VII CANADIANS AND INDONESIANS. THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS HAVE NEVER DEPLOYED TO HONG NGU.

BARNES

BUNQUOTE

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WHITEHOUSE

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